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Members' news



Historian Mary Beard helped out as part of the Visitor Services team as The British Museum reopened in late August. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Hull Maritime Museum and two historic ships to be refurbished to develop maritime quarter

Hull City Council is going ahead with a major project to refurbish two historic ships - Arctic Corsair and Spurn Lightship and is currently seeking tenders for improvements to Hull Maritime Museum, as part of its £27m Yorkshire's Maritime City Project. Work on the museum will include opening up one of the building's tree domes to give access to views across the Humber. A new collections store will open in 2021 – 22 and the museum itself will reopen in 2024. The currently derelict North End Shipyard, at one end of the High Street, will also become a visitor attraction with a learning centre and permanent berth for Arctic Corsair, a ship widely viewed as the city's flagship. Together these attractions will develop a maritime quarter and build on Hull's year as City of Culture. [Museums Journal](#), [Maritime Hull](#)

Images this month: BM reopens and NPG captures a nation holding still

The British Museum reopened in August after a closure of 163 days, its longest ever during peacetime. Historian and BM Trustee Mary Beard was on hand as part of the Visitors Services team to welcome returning crowds. Professor Beard said "*there was a real sense of excitement in the air and you could tell people had booked the opening day to part of this special moment.*" Meanwhile the National Portrait Gallery has published a first few images from its 'Hold Still' project, which invited the public to send pictures of their experience during lockdown. 100 images have been selected from 31,000 submitted to appear in a digital exhibition launching online on 14th September. [British Museum](#), [NPG](#)

A 'brutal' time for museums but a brilliant time to visit

Blue badge tour guide Sophie Campbell sees the Wilton Diptych at the National Gallery several times a year in the course of her work, yet this is what she most wanted to see when she booked a ticket for a personal visit after the gallery reopened. She told *The Guardian* "*normally, it's impossible to enjoy a work like this without someone hovering behind you, waiting to step in. It's one of the many paradoxes of the pandemic that at a brutal time for the National Gallery, there's never been a better time to visit*". Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden has been keen to promote the uniqueness of the moment, and urged audiences to return in the *Evening Standard*. He said "*quieter galleries mean more time and space to enjoy some of the greatest art ever created in the world*". Meanwhile MGS has been promoting reasons to return to Scotland's museums in *The Scotsman*. However, as ALVA's Bernard Donoghue points out, The National Gallery is not untypical in being both 90% down on usual footfall and almost fully booked, with numbers capped by social distancing. Museums are therefore offering a safe, unique experience in the short term, which is nevertheless costing more than remaining closed. [Evening Standard](#), [Guardian](#), [The Scotsman](#)

Museums seeking survival and adaptation

Commercial income unlikely to recover for 'several years' in Welsh museums

A new report from the Senedd's Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee has called for an extension to the furlough scheme when it ends in October to prevent 'unnecessary job losses and insolvencies' in Welsh museums and archives. The report also points to evidence that commercial income of cultural organisations is unlikely to return to pre-covid levels for several years: this financial year alone, National Museum Wales expects to lose £1.8m in commercial revenue. There is also a double hit from scarcer support from funding bodies: NLHF's Andrew White said that 27 projects in Wales worth £1.7m had been paused in favour of creating emergency funding programmes, with the risk that they will 'never return'. In considering future Welsh Government support, there were suggestions that the funding model should become 'less dependent upon visitor numbers' with new KPIs which encouraged working for greater social benefit across health and education (see RSA report on NMW in the article below). The committee recommended revised funding taking into account lost commercial income and increased digital delivery. [Museums Journal](#), [Senedd](#)

RSA report describes how museums can be 'anchor institutions' and agents for social change

A new report by the Royal Society of Arts and British Council, 'Heritage for Inclusive Growth' looks at how museums and heritage can be harnessed for social, environmental and economic good. Many of its eight detailed case studies show how regional development can centre around museums. For example, St Fagans National Museum of History in Cardiff was redeveloped against the background of a city that is relatively diverse and educated, but where a third of the population are living in poverty. People from marginalised groups (including homeless people and those dealing with substance misuse) were given a voice and a chance to volunteer, as part of the 3,000 volunteers and 120 public and third sector bodies involved during and after the development. Adult learning, apprenticeship programmes, gardening opportunities, and construction contracts explicitly awarded based on their capacity to generate social value were all part of the picture. The report argues that this shows how museums can be 'anchor institutions' within their local economies. Another important strand for the project is to encourage heritage institutions to tell a broader range of heritage stories that speak to the whole public and offer concrete work opportunities. For example the Birmingham-based NLHF-funded 'Don't Settle' project aimed to build heritage skills for young people of colour who are under-represented in the sector. Although the report was largely drafted pre-covid and Black Lives Matter, it offers a path showing how museums and heritage should respond to what the authors describe as "*an unprecedented and widespread level of engagement with issues around heritage, identity, place and belonging in our public conversation*". [RSA](#), [RSA](#) (full report)

£2m council letter of guarantee protects York Museums Trust from closure

In mid-August York Museums Trust faced the risk that it could close by January through insolvency unless it received financial backing from the council. Now York Council has agreed to offer a £1.95m letter of guarantee to cover its operations over the next two years. Councillor Darryl Smalley said "*as the curator of the city's collection, a significant contributor to the city's cultural life and tourist economy, we intend to do our best alongside York Museums Trust to secure its long-term future.*" However the trust still faces redundancies and a loss of £2m in income it had expected this year alone. [York Press](#), [York Press](#) (risk of closure), [York Mix](#), [City of York](#)

Collaborative working and mergers for museums in Portsmouth and Sheffield

The Mary Rose and National Museum of the Royal Navy, both based at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard have begun to issue a joint ticket for both venues, which also gives access to several other heritage sites nearby. Aiming to offer a 'simplified and safer day out', the collaboration will also extend beyond ticketing to closer working on operations and marketing. In July, NMRN received a £5.3m grant from Her Majesty's Treasury, which saved it from insolvency. Meanwhile, Museums Sheffield and Sheffield Industrial Museums Trust have announced a merger. This plan has been in the pipeline for three years and is not a direct response to the coronavirus. However, it is well-timed: Kim Streets Chief Executive of Museums Sheffield says "*there is strength in numbers and we will be able to pool a huge amount of talent, expertise and understanding of the city and the collections.*" The new trust will come into being from next April. [Museums Journal](#) (Portsmouth Historic Dockyard), [M + H](#), [Museums Journal](#) (Sheffield), [Portsmouth News](#)

National Videogame Museum raises £200k and reopens with interactivity to continue

The National Videogame Museum in Sheffield was among independents fearing permanent closure in March because of the financial impact of lockdown. However, having raised £200k from 700 supporters, it has now reopened. With 100 playable exhibits, game playing and interactivity is core to the museum's operations. New procedures around cleaning exhibits and hand sanitising between games have allowed this aspect to continue despite covid restrictions. [Videogames Chronicle](#), [NVM](#) (keeping safe at the museum)

£1m Cultural Recovery Fund launched, led by V&A Dundee

Six independent cultural organisations in Dundee, led by V&A Dundee, have launched a £1m cultural recovery fund. It has been kickstarted by the Northwood Charitable Trust which has offered £500k in match funding to other donors, already attracting £200k from private individuals and businesses. Beneficiaries include Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee Heritage Trust, Dundee Rep and Scottish Dance Theatre, Dundee Science Centre, as well as V&A Dundee itself. Christopher Thomson, Trustee of the Northwood Charitable Trust said *"for us, championing the cultural recovery in Dundee is not only about safeguarding our world-class venues but also, importantly, ensuring that their wider economic impact and learning and community programmes continue to benefit everyone in the city."* [V&A Dundee](#), [M + H](#)

Two thirds of Scottish independent museums still at risk of closure in 2021

MGS has told the Scottish Parliament's Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee that two thirds of Scotland's 218 independent museums remain at risk of closure, particularly from April next year. Support from a £4m emergency fund will address the short term, but typically independent museums have less than a year of reserves, and there is no expectation that normality will return by April 2021. Additionally, some smaller, more financially secure museums rely heavily on retired volunteers who are either unable or unwilling to return while the virus is at large. Civic and university museums are also likely to face financial shortfalls. CEO Lucy Casot said that MGS is looking at ways that museums can reconfigure their approach in these circumstances such as *"taking more of a place-based approach to cultural activity in an area and [exploring] whether there are opportunities for things like shared services or shared use of venues"*. However, she stressed that many types of museum will continue to need support. [Museums Journal](#)

Leaked letter tells museum directors to 'be commercially minded' to retain DCMS advocacy for funding

In a private letter to museum directors, Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden has written that museums should be 'commercially minded' and 'maximise income' if they wish him to continue to make the case for support. *The Art Newspaper*, which published a leaked copy of the letter, comments *"the tone of the letter, to say nothing of its message, feels like a mistake. On a purely financial level, no national museum would choose to re-open now; the limited number of visitors cannot cover the cost of keeping the doors open. But museums have felt it is their public duty to open as soon as possible, even if it demands significant losses, and have strained every aspect of their organisation to become coronavirus-safe."* Typically, national museums have successfully pivoted towards a more commercial offer over the past few years – expanding into shops, restaurants, cafés, branding and venue hire – as a way of diversifying as grant in aid has decreased. However, these are the very areas most affected by the coronavirus downturn, where an absence of high-spending international tourists, possibly for years, and the collapse in retail footfall is destroying previously reliable business models. [Art Newspaper](#)

Finding stability



'We're really lucky to have a Garden' by Robert Coyle, part of NPG's 'Hold Still' exhibition, capturing life under lockdown.

13 experts appointed to lead AHRC/DCMS Covid Recovery Panel

DCMS and the Arts and Humanities Research Council have announced a panel of 13 experts who will compile recommendations to help the creative industries recover from Covid-19. They will consider topics including:

- how the pandemic is leading towards new business models in the sector
- challenges and opportunities in digital consumption, including how to monetise digital
- the acceleration of the use of digital in creative technology
- the connection between culture, wellbeing and quality of life.

Co-chaired by Neil Mendoza and AHRC Chair Professor Andrew Thompson, the panel will also include Tate Director Maria Balshaw, The National Gallery's Dr Chris Michaels and Professor Helen Chatterjee of UCL, who has written extensively on museums and wellbeing. The group will meet from September through to July 2021. [M + H](#)

ONS data shows arts and related sectors struggling more than other businesses

The Office for National Statistics has published data showing that businesses in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector are significantly more likely to be struggling than average. By mid-August, a third of businesses overall were trading at the same level as 2019 and only 11% had lost more than half of their income. However, in arts-related sectors 75% have seen revenues fall and 41% have lost more than half. 44% of arts and recreation staff remain on furlough, more than double the national average of 18%. Employers in the sector have been more generous than average in topping up Government furlough payments, but no figures are available for the sector's many freelance workers. [Arts Professional](#)

IFS report considers how council budgets are being hit during 2020 – 21

The Institute for Fiscal Studies has published a report assessing how council budgets are likely to be affected by Covid-19 during 2020 – 21, based on what is known about Quarter 1 and projections for the rest of the year. It emphasises that much about its assessment is approximate and may change. Figures especially relevant to culture show that:

- Councils forecast an overall fall of £2.8bn in non-tax income, with £1.3bn of this incurred from April – June. However the percentage loss estimated by each council varies widely – ranging from less than 5% to more than 20%.
- They also anticipate 'billions of pounds more' in losses of local tax collections.
- Councils have had an additional £4.8bn made available by central Government to cover general and specific additional spend, but are still facing a shortfall of approximately £2bn.
- Income from culture and leisure services is forecast to decline by 50%, or £500m across the country – only 1% or so of council budgets overall, but potentially serious in funding models for culture. The addition of an extra £192m spend on culture this year leaves a deficit of around £700m in all.
- During May and June, council spending pressures increased by 21%, with public health at 358%, education at 80%, and culture and leisure services the third highest in terms of percentage increase at 54%.

[IFS, Museums Journal](#)

Cultural sector tax relief statistics released

HMRC has published the latest statistics on the take up of creative industries sector tax reliefs, including Museum and Galleries Exhibition Tax Reliefs (MGETR), first created in 2017 and backdated to 2016. Figures show that:

- In 2019 – 20 £16m was paid out on 170 claims relating to 1,045 exhibitions. These exhibitions will typically have taken place in previous calendar years – claims for 19 – 20 will appear in future figures. This is more than three times the number of claims paid compared with 18 – 19 when there were 50 claims paid.
- Overall, since the relief was introduced £20m has been paid on 220 claims on 1,345 exhibitions.
- On an accruals basis, 290 claims for 1,880 exhibitions are now in the system.

[Gov.uk](#)

New plans for learning and outreach to schools

Space for Learning guidance on how to be 'covid secure' for cultural education sessions

Space for Learning, a cultural coalition which includes NLHF, ACE and the Clore Duffield Foundation has published 'Covid Secure guidance for learning spaces in museums, galleries heritage and performing arts sites', in partnership with GEM and Engage visual arts among others. The guidance aims to help learning services and freelancers understand how to work safely during the Covid-19 pandemic, and provides a practical framework to think about what is needed to continue – or restart – learning services during the Covid-19 pandemic. The guidance was completed on 12th August but will continue to be updated as new information emerges. [Space for Learning](#), [GEM](#)

Survey explores how school visits to museums may change post Covid-19

The University of Leicester has published detailed results of a survey of 76 museum professionals involved in delivering school visits, assessing how these are likely to change as schools and museums reopen post-lockdown. The survey took place in the month up to 20th June. Findings include:

- Half said that their museum had been able to stay in touch with schools under lockdown, a third said they had not and 17% were unsure. Email, newsletters and social media were the main ways of staying in touch.
- The main challenges faced by museum school services include uncertainty over rules and regulations, impact on school, museum and family budgets, and staff and public confidence in the new arrangements.
- Many implied that social distancing will mean that museums will not be able to host as many schoolchildren as previously.
- Although only a third of museum work with schools had no digital aspect pre-covid, digital activities are now 60% more likely to feature, while hands on approaches are less favoured.
- Digital additions will include home activities, virtual tours, live lectures, online collections, bite sized talks and social media.
- 95% of respondents said that a blend of real world and online activity is the way forward, with some advantages of being able to reach beyond a museum's usual catchment area, alongside the downsides of decreased physical interaction.

A large majority of respondents said that school visits are important both for core mission, audience development and income generation. The majority will continue to find ways to welcome schools.

[University of Leicester](#)

Also: The Scottish Maritime Museum is an example of one museum adapting its educational offer to the new circumstances with its 'Ship to Shore' online learning workshops centred around STEM subjects and available from February 2021. [M + H](#)

Teachers describe what they need post-lockdown in cultural education survey

An ACE-backed survey of more than 500 teachers and education workers sets out what has worked best in weaving arts and culture into education during lockdown – and what schools now feel they most need from the cultural sector.

- Out of six possible approaches suggested, creative activities were judged to have worked the best for teaching during lockdown, regarded as successful by just under 70% of respondents: only 20% thought that the 'normal timetable delivered virtually' had been effective.
- Having a weekly theme to build activities around worked especially well for primary school children, as did more ambitious projects where children each contributed to the whole in virtual sports days, mass singing or collaborative projects.
- Secondary school children responded well to practical and vocational tasks such as creating radio shows or online galleries of work. They were also engaged by quizzes, competitions and work that reflected home life, current affairs and experiences during lockdown.
- Most respondents are now keen to work with the cultural sector to develop new ways of working remotely: only 9% of secondary and 17% of primary schools declined the opportunity when offered.
- Good mental health and wellbeing is at the top of teachers' minds as pupils return.
- A majority of schools cite the Spring of 2021 as the earliest point that they will consider making external visits or receive visitors – although welcoming creatives into schools is likely to happen a little before visits resume.
- There is also enthusiasm for using cultural spaces that otherwise remain closed for school activities, with 79% saying they would be very or quite interested.

[Curious Minds](#)

Redefining museums



'Prayers for our Community' by The Revd. Tim Hayward, part of NPG's 'Hold Still' exhibition, capturing life under lockdown.

New leadership as ICOM members continue to disagree on the definition of a museum

The heated debate at the International Council of Museums, as it attempts to agree a new definition of what a museum is, has continued leading to the resignation of many members of its executive board over the summer, including its Turkish president, Suay Aksoy in June. The argument first erupted in September 2019, when a meeting of ICOM rejected a 99 word definition, which included mention of democratising spaces, social justice and planetary wellbeing, but omitted direct mention of education and collections. The controversy has been shaped by regional circumstances, with African museums supportive of a definition including the language of human rights - but with others favouring a more conservative definition, or fearing the consequences for museums in countries with authoritarian regimes. Now ICOM's new President, Alberto Garlandini says that he is confident that he can 'create an atmosphere' in which people can vote on a new definition at its next conference in Prague in 2022. In the meantime, ICOM held its first virtual assembly in July, with the hope of more frequent strategic meetings in future. *The Art Newspaper* comments "*many think the rebooted definition should be broad enough to include all sorts of museums*". [Art Newspaper](#), [New York Times](#)

National Museum Wales rethinks the idea of a museum as it consults on plans to 2030

National Museum Wales is consulting the public across Wales to hear what it can do towards making Wales a better place to live and work. It has already identified some topics including access to collections, representation of all communities, biodiversity and the environment, health and wellbeing and digital content. Director David Anderson said that the Covid-19 epidemic has challenged the museum to rethink its approach, and to begin to redefine what a museum can be. He said *"we are now moving away from the 20th century model of a museum as a holder of objects that operates only within its own walls, to a new model which ensures that culture is accessible, relevant and engaging in communities across Wales."* [NMW](#) (survey)

Controversy and culture wars as museums highlight objects linked to slavery in collections

Museums are highlighting links to slavery in their collections in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement - as well as being challenged to do more in the decolonisation debate. For reopening V&A Dundee has updated its Scottish design gallery to show how materials and iconic patterns are linked to the story of Empire, and the British Museum has launched a new collecting and empire trail. Other interventions have produced press headlines and strong reactions on social media, for example a National Trust twitter thread highlighting objects linked to slavery on its property - which produced both praise and some hostile tweeting. The National Trust, which says that a third of its properties have links to slavery, will be accelerating its discussion of these histories in response to BLM. Similarly, a move by the British Museum to remove a bust of founder Hans Sloane from a pedestal and into a nearby cabinet with material explaining his links to slavery has produced press headlines, including claims by Charles Moore in *The Spectator* that Sloane was only tangentially involved in the trade. Historian David Olusoga comments that the 'outbreak of hostilities' over a relatively modest intervention has *"little... in reality... to do with Sloane or even with the British Museum and we are not at the beginning of some Orwellian age of historical erasure. Rather, Britain is gradually coming to the end of a very different and highly effective process of historical erasure that has endured for centuries... Sloane's achievements remain undimmed, but while he stood on a pedestal the significance of slavery to his life and to his collection was rendered invisible. Acknowledging this unpleasant reality is all the museum has sought to do. Many want it to go much further in confronting the role of both slavery and imperialism in its history and the British national story."* Meanwhile a programme for Radio 4 'The Empty Cases' brings together many of the voices in the current restitution debate, especially around whether objects taken in violent events during empire and given to museums should be loaned or returned. [Guardian](#) (V&A Dundee), [Guardian](#) (David Olusoga), [Guardian](#) (National Trust), [New York Times](#), [British Museum](#) (collecting and empire trail), [BBC Radio 4](#) (The Empty Cases), [National Trust](#) (twitter), [National Trust](#) (statement on histories of slavery in its collections), [Spectator](#)

Scottish Government launches independent group on museum collections, colonialism and slavery

The Scottish Government has announced that it will sponsor an independent expert group to explore how Scotland's existing and future museum collections can better represent the country's colonial and slavery history. The group will be independently chaired and diverse in membership. Meanwhile Museums Galleries Scotland will co-ordinate a national consultation in collaboration with Glasgow Life to establish public and expert perspectives. There will also be research into the existing work in this area across Scottish museums. Lucy Casot, CEO of Museums Galleries Scotland said: *"the Black Lives Matter movement has highlighted the critical need to understand and act on the racial injustice and colonialism that is still prevalent today. Museums are integral parts of communities as spaces to reflect and ask questions. Through revisiting and expanding the stories and histories they tell museums can play a key role in helping us all to have a better understanding of our past."*

Museums Change Live Awards seeks nominations, including best lockdown project

The MA is seeking nominations for its annual Museums Change Lives Awards. The four categories this year are best lockdown project, best small museum project (for museums with a turnover under £320k), best Museums Change Lives project (highlighting best practice around social impact) and Radical Changemaker. The deadline for nominations is 25th September at 5.30pm. [Museums Journal](#)

Networks

New Folklore Museums Network is launched

Folklore collections may tread the line between fact and fiction, and encompass a huge variety of objects from hair garlands and Rapper swords to manuscripts of local lore, 'curiosities' and concealed objects. They are at risk of being misidentified, uncatalogued or sidelined. A new Folklore Museums Subject Specialist Network aims to start a dialogue about these ambiguous objects and shine a light on the subject. Everyone is welcome to join the group, which held its first event during August. Convenor Peter Hewitt is currently inviting 300 word blogs for the group's website. [Folklore Museums Network](#)

Surveys



The British Museum reopens. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

London Recovery Board seeks views on how the capital should look post-Covid

Since May, the Mayor of London has convened a London Recovery Board to address how the city can recover from the coronavirus socially and economically, with a particular focus on preventing unemployment, narrowing inequalities, keeping young people safe and creating a greener London. It is now seeking views through a dedicated discussion board, with topics including the 15 minute city, digital access and good work. All those living and working in the capital are welcome to contribute – results will be assessed in mid-September. [Mayor of London](#) (discussion), [Mayor of London](#) (Recovery Board overview)

Survey for users of audio description at museums and heritage sites

VocalEyes is inviting users of audio description to complete a survey – partly about revisiting museums as they reopen and partly about online experiences. This will be used by VocalEyes to give museums good advice about how to best support audio description users. [VocalEyes](#) (overview), [VocalEyes](#) (survey)

DCMS second round coronavirus impact survey

DCMS has launched a second round of its coronavirus survey to assess the impact on its sectors. As with the first round which gathered views from late April – late May the survey will be used to shape policy interventions. [DCMS](#)

Events

M + H seeks themes, ideas and talk proposals for its Autumn Series

During November, Museums + Heritage will be hosting a new programme, the Autumn Series, a comprehensive online programme of talks, webinars and articles to support and inspire the sector at a time of great change. M + H would like to hear both about areas where you might be struggling – and also what you would like to know more about. It welcomes thoughts about potential sessions, including offers to speak on a topic. Please respond ideally by 11th September – but M + H will aim to consider ideas sent later into the month. [M + H](#), [M + H](#) (submit ideas for the programme)

Take part in Sound Walk September

The Museum of Walking (aka Andrew Stuck) has gone online with two collaborators to create Sound Walk September: a collection of audio walks and discussions of how to use audio as art, documentary or history. Events include a look at London soundscapes across a century. Stuck invites museums to contribute events, and is also offering workshop opportunities to museums during September. [Sound Walk September](#), [Twitter](#)

Culture Geek gathers speakers across culture and digital

Culture Geek's conference is going online this year with speakers including Nanet Beumer from Rijksmuseum, Dupé Ajayi from the The Shed (New York's newest major arts venue) and Catherine Devine of Microsoft. The event takes place on 20th November – tickets are £49, but organisers ask those who cannot afford it, whether students or unemployed to get in touch to discuss admission. [Culture Geek](#)

Julie's Bicycle launches autumn season of Creative Climate chats

Julie's Bicycle has announced a new autumn season of its live Creative Climate Chats which have previously covered topics such as net zero, climate justice and economics for a regenerative economy, all from the perspective of the cultural sector. The next session on 9th September will be with Deep Green Philly founder Ron Whyte, who works with residents, artists and students in Philadelphia to find ecology-inspired solutions to the city's trash. October's chat will be with alumni of the Creative Climate Leadership Programme and in December Horniman CEO Nick Merriman will discuss its Climate and Ecology Manifesto. [Julie's Bicycle](#) (Ron Whyte), [Julie's Bicycle](#) (Climate alumni), [Julie's Bicycle](#) (Nick Merriman)

Edinburgh Culture Conversations

The University of Edinburgh Culture Conversations is an online event series bringing together members of the public, artists, academics and cultural leaders to debate how the arts and creative sectors can help society recover from the effects of Covid-19. Topics include how to plan for future cultural events, how universities can help with the reset of civic life, and what kind of future cultural innovations will emerge next. The series runs live until 14th September, with recordings available post-event. [University of Edinburgh](#)

Extend Leadership programme 2020 – 21 for cultural education professionals

The gallery education body Engage has announced the tenth year of its Leadership programme for early to mid-career professionals working in learning and education roles in the arts and cultural sectors in England, Scotland and Wales. This year, the programme will consist of two cohorts of thirty, the first running from October – December 2020 and the second from January – March 2021. The fee for the course is £200 and the deadline to apply is 14th September. [Engage](#)

Digital Cultural Network autumn programme

ACE's Digital Cultural Network has announced its autumn programme of training events, with topics including Audiences now and in the future (8th October), Building digital skills for the future (29th October) and Evolving business models and new revenue streams (19th November). Tickets are free but tend to book up quickly. [DCN](#)

2020 Sporting Heritage Conference

The Sporting Heritage Conference will take place online between 22nd – 23rd October. Day one covers the resilience and sustainability of sporting heritage, day two will focus on diversity. Tickets are £20 for non-members of the Sporting Heritage Network and £10 for members. [Sporting Heritage](#)

Cultural policy responses to Covid-19: An international perspective

An event run by the Centre for Cultural Value in partnership with the British Council will present recent research into how cultural policy across the world has responded to Covid-19, and how it might continue to change in a post-covid future. Speakers include Anne Torreggiani of the Audience Agency and CCV, Chenine Bhatena, Creative Director of Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 and Moira Sinclair, Chief Executive of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. The event is free and takes place online on 17th September. [Centre for Cultural Value](#)

Connecting Culture – virtual international gathering to rebuild following Covid

Experience UK is holding a virtual conference and expo 'Connecting Culture' to bring together professionals from the museum and heritage sector, and discuss how to respond and rebuild post-virus. It will also showcase UK companies which can offer expertise to museum and heritage attractions globally. The full programme has now been published, with topics ranging from effective museum shops, using technology to bring the past to life and the future of attractions post Covid-19. The event takes place on 9 – 10 September. Tickets are free. [Experience UK](#), [Connecting Culture](#) (booking), [Connecting Culture](#) (full programme)

Serving digital audiences

Experimentation, creation, but a widening class gap – cultural consumption under lockdown

The Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre has published the results of its six week survey of cultural consumption during lockdown, in partnership with the Intellectual Property Office with tracking by Audience Net. Figures show that:

- There was increasing use across all content types, but class divisions of users widened: middle class consumption increased faster than working class.
- Four in ten increased content creation, with 17% creating digital content for the first time. Although 16 – 24 year olds had the largest increase in content creation, over 55s were the most likely first time creators.
- In early weeks, people were more likely to try new forms for the first time, including multi-player video games, looking at art online and filmed theatre and dance.

[CreativePEC](#) (twitter summary), [Creative PEC](#)

£1m in additional funds to NLHF's Digital Skills for Heritage programme

The National Lottery Heritage Fund's Digital Skills for Heritage programme has received an additional £1m from Government, on top of £1.5m already invested. A recent survey shows the areas where cultural organisation are asking for additional support: creating content 25%, marketing and communications 23%, community building (from inclusion and safeguarding to crowdsourcing and attracting volunteers) 18%, strategy 13%, events 10% and online learning 6%. At 4% working at a distance requests doubled during April and May and 2% wanted more confidence in working with data, especially security and the dangers of being targeted by trolls. NLHF aims to expand its work in these areas with the new support. [NLHF](#), [NLHF](#) (Digital Skills for Heritage overview)

MCG provides a snapshot of user reactions to online conferences

As practically all training events large or small go online, many museums will be asking what technology to use, whether/what to charge and how long people pay attention when online. Museums Computer Group asked all these questions while planning its own conference (now going ahead as two half days, pay what you can, 9 – 10 December), and has published the survey results, which are illuminating about average preferences for this emerging format. [MCG](#)

Plugged in, powered up – advocacy and training for digital preservation

The National Archives has produced concise advocacy resources, explaining why organisations should digitally archive their materials, how digital resources can become unusable if stored on dated technologies, and increasingly expensive to recover if left for too long. TNA is also offering a training programme to give archivists appropriate skills and a leaflet for decision-makers. [The National Archives](#)

Employment



'Gimba the Ward Host' by Hassan Akkad. Part of NPG's 'Hold Still' exhibition, capturing life under lockdown.

Scottish Government gives £3.8m, preserving 200 jobs at the National Trust for Scotland

The Scottish Government has provided a support package of £3.8m for the National Trust for Scotland, saving around 200 jobs at the trust where 420 staff were placed at risk of redundancy in May. Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop said *"the severe impact of the pandemic means that unfortunately not all jobs can be saved but this funding will go far to protect as many critical roles across the National Trust for Scotland estate as we can."* The package also means that all NTS properties can now reopen. It will continue to work with the Scottish Government to review its business model and look at sustainability over the long term. [Scottish Government, M + H](#)

National Trust defends restructuring plans as it reduces curator posts

The National Trust has denied accusations in the press of 'dumbing down' after it announced plans to reduce curatorial posts from 111 to 80 in post-Covid restructuring. New roles will be created with more broad ranging job titles, including a national curator of inclusive histories and curators of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, recruited from existing staff members – but more specific posts covering furniture, textiles and libraries will go. Director of Culture and Engagement John Orna-Ornstein said that the NT did not want to 'salami slice' in response to the situation, but instead orient different sites to different specialisms – with some with the most significant collections developed as cultural centres, and others opened on a booked basis for tours, talks and visitor experiences. The contraction of these posts post-Covid comes after a fairly recent expansion: between 2016 – 2018 NT announced that it had expanded its curator posts from 36 to 65. [Museums Journal](#), [BBC](#)

Also: The Bletchley Park Trust, which tells the story of codebreaking during the Second World War is facing the redundancies of a third of its staff, following a £2m loss of income during lockdown Chief Executive Officer Iain Standen said *"I cannot stress how deeply saddened I am to announce the need for such a severe restructuring. We have built a brilliant team on the back of huge success and with great ambitions for the future, which we will now need to re-examine."* [Museums Journal](#), [BBC](#)

300 redundancies expected at Tate Enterprises as visitors are projected to decrease by 50%

Tate Enterprises – the commercial arm of Tate, is to make 313 of its 640 staff redundant across publishing, gallery shops and food outlets. Directors of Tate Enterprises Hamish Anderson and Carmel Allen said *"We have worked hard and exhaustively, to model as optimistically as we can for the future and to keep as many jobs as possible...it is with great sadness that we have been forced by the current circumstances to have to make these decisions."* Tate Director Maria Balshaw has said that the job losses reflect an expected visitor footfall of about 50%. Although Tate has received £7m from the Cultural Recovery Fund, it has spent £5m from its reserves to cover Tate Enterprises losses this year. PCS, which represents some Tate Enterprises workers described the cuts as 'brutal' and is pursuing strike action. [The Art Newspaper](#), [Guardian](#), [Inews](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Museum Freelance offers £500 bursaries to freelancers in critical need of support

Museum Freelance, the network which supports and champions freelancers in the sector has announced a £7.5k hardship fund to provide emergency support for freelancers who work with museums, heritage sites, galleries, archives and libraries in the UK. There are 15 £500 one-off grants available for those needing critical support because of the impact of Covid-19 on their work and livelihood. The deadline for applications is this Friday 4th September, with outcomes announced by 11th September. [Museum Freelance](#)

Getting in and getting on: Class, participation and job quality in the UK's Creative Industries

A new report from the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC) shows the extent of under-representation of people with working class backgrounds in culture. This group makes up around a third of the population, but only 16% of the creative sector. The analysis, drawn from the Labour Force Survey data and socio-economic occupation codes, showed that:

- Working class backgrounds are under-represented in every part of culture except crafts.
- There is also a 'double disadvantage' for anyone who is also disabled, minority ethnic or a woman.
- For museums, galleries and libraries data is limited to 2016 and 2017 only, with a smaller unweighted base compared to other artforms. With that caveat, figures for 2017 show museums employ 48% from a privileged background, 29% intermediate and 23% working class. By contrast, the average across creative occupations for 2019 is 52%/32%/16%, and the average across the whole workforce is 36%/35%/29%.
- Publishing, music, performing and visual arts, film and fashion are most inaccessible to those from working class backgrounds, with only 13 – 16% building a career.

Report co-author Dr Dave O'Brien has also summarised the report in a twitter thread. [Arts Professional](#), [Creative PEC](#), [Museum as Muck](#) (twitter - network for working class museum)

professionals), [Twitter](#) (report summary)

Also: The Southbank Centre has published a longer statement on its planned job losses and serious financial situation, saying that it has drained most of its reserves and will lose over £25m in the coming year, or half of its annual expenditure. It says it plans to curate art projects into the autumn, although it will be unable to produce much work itself. [Southbank Centre](#)

Returning workforces? Government seeks to encourage employees back to city centres

Data drawn from mobile phones in the UK suggests that only 17% have returned to work in the UK's 63 biggest cities, with Government statistics on public transport showing 30% Underground usage in August and 40% of normal bus journeys outside London. Only car usage is up to 90% of its previous level, presumably as the most reliable way of social distancing. The Government is launching an autumn campaign to highlight the mental health benefits of returning to offices, hoping also to preserve the retail and catering jobs which serve many commuters. A new National Rail 'Alert Me' app has also been designed to help people avoid busier trains.

However, reaction from business has been mixed at best: although the CBI has advocated a 'middle way' of supporting more people to return, of 50 of the biggest UK employers questioned by the BBC in late August, 24 had no plans to return workers to the office, although 20 are open for those unable to work from home. Firms cited the limit to the number of people who could get into office space under social distancing – more anecdotally, some smaller firms have discovered they can work effectively without the outlay on rent. The trend has been noted internationally, with different takes on the psychological effects of homeworking: *El Pais* suggests that it causes 'chronic stress and endless hours' as work and home life collapse together, but *The New York Times* reports that 86% were satisfied with working from home, with only 1 in 5 wanting to return to the office full time. Meanwhile, job losses on the high street, including 2,900 in late August at lunch retailer Pret A Manger, are driven by deserted city centres – and follow the same pattern as museum sector redundancies around retail in larger cities. It remains to be seen whether this loss of footfall for city centre museums is temporary or, after more than a century, heralds the death of the commute. If the latter, a more dispersed workforce might reshape the calculation for museums in places previously regarded as dormitory towns, or lead to museums creating more decentralised programming. [Guardian](#), [Times](#), [BBC](#), [Guardian](#) (CBI), [El Pais](#), [New York Times](#), [Guardian](#) (Pret job losses), [Telegraph](#)

Henry Moore Foundation launches Artist Award Scheme to support income

The Henry Moore Foundation has launched a new Artist Award Scheme to support the future of sculpture, and directly support artists at a time when their incomes are under threat from Covid-19. 40 artists have been nominated to share £60k in the first round of the scheme with recipients including Anna Berry, Appau Jnr Boakye-Yiadom and Jasleen Kaur. The fund is unrestricted, meaning artists can spend the money however they need to, including for example paying studio rent. Director Godfrey Worsdale said "*Henry Moore himself benefitted from an ex-serviceman's grant after he fought in World War One, which enabled him to study sculpture at Leeds College of Art. With this in mind, the Foundation wanted to offer timely support and give artists across the country some much-needed assistance.*" [Henry Moore Foundation](#)

Tourism



Reopening day at the British Museum. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Revised tourism forecast suggests 73% drop in inbound tourists and 49% for domestic visitors

VisitBritain has published its revised predictions for visitors during 2020:

- It anticipates that inbound visits will decline by 73% to 11 million and a 79% in spending to £6bn. Pre-covid, the prediction was for 30.7m visitors spending £24bn.
- Domestic tourism spending is predicted to be down by 49% to £46.8bn, compared to 2019 when the UK public spent £91.6bn. Although this is a smaller decline in percentage terms than in inbound travellers, it represents a greater overall loss to the tourism industry.

VisitBritain emphasises that these are short-term, best guess figures based on the assumption of there being no widely available vaccine in 2020, but also no second lockdown. Meanwhile the World

Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) predicted that the UK might lose £22bn a year in international tourism, as its Chief Executive Gloria Guevera criticised the Government for stop-start quarantine measures and a lack of track-and-trace at international entry points. [VisitBritain](#), [Guardian](#)

Also: VisitBritain has also published a report on the regional spread of inbound tourism during 2019. It shows a mixed picture, with growth in the North East (10%), North West (6%) and West Midlands (11%), but declines in Yorkshire (down 8%) and Scotland (down 7%, although that was coupled with a 7% increase in spending). [VisitBritain](#)

Tracking returning visitors and public sentiment

Polls and surveys continue to track how people feel about returning to arts, culture and tourist attractions:

- VisitBritain's current round of tourist sentiment tracking ended in mid-August, but will resume in mid-September. Figures for 10th – 14th August show that 46% of the population believe that the worst is yet to come with Covid-19, and 40% believe that things will stay the same, with only 14% believing the worst is past. Asked about holiday plans, 34% feel confident about taking a holiday in September, rising to 41% for October – December. During August and September, the most popular cited holiday region is the South West, in the countryside or a village. [VisitBritain](#)
- Office for National Statistics data on holiday plans published on 21st August showed 27% of adults saying that they were likely or very likely to go on holiday in the UK over the summer plus 6% planning to go abroad. 57% said they could afford a holiday this year, while 34% said they could not. [ONS](#)
- A poll commissioned by the Arts Council of Ireland, with 1000 respondents balanced to reflect the country's demographic make-up, found that 75% had concerns about returning to indoor venues such as theatres, cinemas and concert halls. However, 54% said they would be more likely to visit if numbers were limited.
- The Taking Part tracker, which is assessing the number of people returning to national museums as they reopen on a weekly basis shows that in the week beginning 17th August reopened venues averaged 20.9% of the visitors they would normally expect, rising from 8.6% in the week of 20th. This now includes eight venues, all operating on limited timed tickets and many open for restricted hours. [Gov.uk](#)

KQ research suggests anxiety about the Underground is greatest barrier to London museum visits

The Knowledge Quarter (KQ) - a group of academic, cultural, research, scientific and media organisations within a one mile radius from Kings Cross, has published a report on the sentiment of local cultural audiences about returning to venues. Based on data collected in July to early August it found that:

- Museums and galleries seem likely to see audiences return sooner than other artforms. 3% said they had visited already, 17% planned to visit as soon as venues open and 38% within three months. By comparison, only 19 – 28% intended to visit other cultural venues including theatre, dance and arts centres.
- The greatest barrier to visits is not a feeling of being unsafe within museums and galleries themselves, but transport to get there. 92% said they would feel anxious travelling on the Underground, and 53% currently say they will not use it at all. Across all ages, women are consistently more cautious than men, by a few percentage points. All other forms of public transport produce anxiety hovering between 69 – 80%.
- Another issue for local footfall is that only 20% of the respondents – typically office workers – said they would be back at work by August. A further 21% expected to be back within three months, and an additional 22% in six. This projected slow return means that passing local visits are likely to be reduced.

KQ points out that its research has limitations – its 549 respondents are already engaged with the sector, self-selected to complete the survey and either work for one of KQ's more than 100 organisations, or are regularly in the area. Nevertheless, it gives some insights into the barriers to return shaping local visitors to city centre museums. [Knowledge Quarter](#)

International

International organisations offer 'cultural first aid' to Beirut where the sector is a keystone to freedom of expression

Following the enormous explosion at the port in Beirut on 4th August, around 640 buildings with heritage status were damaged, plus a number of museums. Sursock Museum, close to the epicentre of the explosion, is reported to have suffered extensive damage including the destruction of its stained glass windows, with the Museum of Lebanese Prehistory requiring structural support, and the Arab Image Foundation suffering damage to its storage area. 27 international organisations have signed a pledge to do all they can to recover heritage sites, including the UK's Cultural Protection Fund, the International Council of Museums, Louvre and Prince Claus Fund. However, Lebanon faces serious problems: power from the national grid was limited to a couple of hours a day even before the explosion, the economy is in a weakened state and the devastated port was essential to the import-dependent country. Saleh Barakat, who runs Agial Art Gallery and lost a member of staff, Firas Dahwish, in the explosion told *Art Net* "Beirut, more than Lebanon, is a central place for the whole region. It represents a free culture that is being endangered today. The survival of Beirut means the survival of this plurality, diversity, tolerance, culture, and freedom of expression. If we do not get help now, we risk becoming another Gaza, Syria, or Yemen." [Art Newspaper](#), [Arab Image Foundation](#), [Guardian](#) (Sursock Museum), [Unesco](#), [ArtNet](#)

New Covid Relief Funds

ACE launches £270m repayable finance strand of its Cultural Recovery Fund

ACE has launched its £270m repayable finance fund, to support culturally significant organisations which were viable pre-covid, but now face imminent risk of failure and have exhausted other support routes. The minimum bid is £3m and there is no upper limit on requests, although applicants should bear in mind the size of the whole pot. There is a 2% interest rate per annum, with an initial payment holiday of up to four years and up to 20 to repay the loan. The deadline for applications is 9th September. [ACE](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Cultural Capital Kickstart Fund for existing ACE capital grant holders

ACE has opened a £55m Cultural Capital Kickstart Fund, open to organisations already in receipt of one of ACE's capital grants who can show that they now have a capital shortfall and need extra funds to viably complete their project. There is no upper limit to the amount that can be requested, but it should be commensurate with the capital grant originally given. For organisations to be eligible, work must have started on projects by 1st April 2020, and have not received a final payment by 10th September 2020. The deadline for applications is midday on 10th September, with decisions by the end of November. [ACE](#)

MGS opens £4m Recovery and Resilience Fund for independent museums

Museums Galleries Scotland has opened its £4m fund to support accredited and non-accredited independent museums in Scotland at risk as a result of the coronavirus. It will support financial viability to March 2021 and measures towards financial sustainability beyond that date. It is expected that most awards will be upwards of £10k, though some small museums may apply for less. State aid rules mean that grants cannot exceed Euro 800k (or around £732k). The fund will be assessing applications as it receives them, with an aim to give decisions within four weeks. It will close at 5pm on 30th October. [MGS](#)

Successful applicants to the Art Fund's Covid-19 response funding – and advice for the third round

Art Fund has announced the recipients of £630k in funding in the first round of its 'Respond and Reimagine' grants, out of a total pot of £1.5m to be spent by October. These include the Florence Nightingale Museum, which will use £46k to employ actors as guides to both marshal social distancing and immerse people in the nurse's world; The Box in Plymouth has £25k and will buy styluses so people do not have to touch digital exhibits, and the Wycombe Museum receives £35k to bring the museum into the town's main shopping centre. Only 16% of first round applications were successful because of strong demand, but Art Fund has created a webinar and resources to help organisations build a strong application. Applications also give insight into the ways museums are seeking to adapt – in particular, moving school programmes online or into a hybrid format, hyper-local visitor engagement programmes and diversity work, around both audiences and programmes. [Art Fund](#), [BBC](#), [Art Fund](#) (webinar on funding opportunities), [Museums Journal](#)

Historic England launches £50m for Heritage Stimulus Fund

Meanwhile a new £50m Heritage Stimulus Fund administered by Historic England will help restart vital maintenance at heritage visitor attractions. The money will be divided into £34m for Programmes of Major Works at nationally important attractions; £5m in repair grants to already identified sites and an additional £11m for its previously over-subscribed Heritage at Risk Fund. [Historic England](#)

National Academy for Social Prescribing receives additional £5m for post-Covid support

The National Academy for Social Prescribing (NESP) has received an additional £5m from Government to support health and wellbeing in the community post-lockdown. Schemes currently being developed include the Southbank Centre's Art by Post scheme, which sends free creative activity booklets to those with dementia or chronic health conditions. [Gov.uk](#)

Jobs

A few posts are being advertised this month:

- [Head of Enterprise Portfolio Management Office – British Library, West Yorkshire](#)
- [Exhibitions Project Manager - Railway Museum, York](#)
- [Project Curator: Peru Exhibition - British Museum](#)
- [Digital Coordinator - Horniman Museum & Gardens](#)
- [Learning & Participation Team Leader - National Museums Liverpool](#)

You can find new additions on our website [here](#).

This newsletter can also be read online at <http://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/news/newsletters/>